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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4228
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2019

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SUBJECT: SWEDEN ON AFGHANISTAN POLICY REVIEW

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Summary

[1](#)1. (C) In recent weeks, CDA and Poloffs have discussed Afghanistan with a wide range of Swedish officials in the Swedish Prime Ministry, MFA, Defense Ministry and aid agency. They confirmed that:

-- Sweden will in 2009 implement last December's decision to deploy additional troops (130, for a total of 500);

-- Some 40 of these troops will work in a new battalion-level Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT);

-- Sweden will deploy a C-130 with no geographical caveats during the summer;

-- Sweden will up foreign assistance resources to some \$60-80 million annually for the next three years.

[1](#)2. (C) Post believes that Sweden can be persuaded to do more, perhaps adding an additional OMLT and upping contributions to the ANA Trust Fund. Looking ahead, our interlocutors also say that:

-- Sweden will, during its EU Presidency, lead the EU in a comprehensive response to needs on the civilian side, especially in the area of police training. Sweden will set an example by recruiting more police trainers for EUPOL through enhanced salary and benefits packages;

-- The international community must stress to President Karzai the importance of battling corruption;

-- Sweden will bolster development assistance in its PRT to increase local support for the mission.

The May 4 meetings that FM Carl Bildt will have with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary Steinberg, and U/S Burns are good opportunities for steering Swedish actions. End Summary.

Swedes Note Recent Troop Increases...

[1](#)3. (C) EU Affairs Minister Cecilia Malmstrom told CDA on March 3 that Sweden will be in Afghanistan "for the long haul," even if Swedish casualties occur and public opinion starts to turn against the mission (Ref D). Defense Minister Sten Tolgfors told CDA in February that the C-130 to be deployed in the summer will have no geographical caveats and

that the additional 130 troops (for a total of 500) will include an OMLT with 40 soldiers working at the battalion level, evenly divided among five companies (Refs E and F). Three medevac helicopters, originally planned for deployment in 2009, will be delayed until 2010 because of technical problems.

14. (C) Separately, contacts in the military tell us they could and would do more if ordered, including additional OMLT elements or contributions to the ANA Trust Fund. Post suggests that Bildt's May 4 meetings in Washington include discussion on these additional potential contributions, as well as on more Swedish police trainers for the EUPOL mission. Early announcement of additional Swedish contributions, in advance of Sweden's EU Presidency, could help spur action by other EU states.

...and Assistance Increases

15. (C) SIDA will increase total assistance to Afghanistan in 2009 to \$63 million, which will be upped to \$71 million in 2010 and \$79 million in 2011; these figures do not include emergency humanitarian relief, according to Sarah Gustafsson, SIDA's Afghanistan Country Program Director, who added that SIDA will continue to focus on gender equality, reproductive health, and infrastructure development (mainly roads). She stated that 20-25 percent of funds, some \$18 million in 2009, has been earmarked for development and reconstruction in the four northern provinces covered by the Swedish-led PRT in Mazar-e-Sharif (Balkh, Samangan, Sar-e Pol, and Jowzjan). Afghanistan is the fourth largest recipient of Swedish

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assistance, and SIDA intends to have 14 civilians working on Afghanistan by the end of 2009: five in Stockholm, five in Kabul, and one each in newly-opened offices in each of the four provincial capitals of the Swedish PRT.

Future Strategies: Focus Development

16. (C) As far as Swedish thinking on the way ahead, Anne Hoglund, Deputy Director of the MFA Asia Division, told us March 13 that development aid would be the centerpiece to Swedish efforts in Afghanistan. The Afghan people must see quickly that there is an alternative to growing poppy for the Taliban, she continued. The MFA had, accordingly, been pressuring SIDA to start operating some "quick return" projects. So far, SIDA "only wants to build long-term capacity" and that does little to sell local tribes on the benefits of the Swedish/Western presence in their country. MFA had successfully pressured SIDA, she continued, to "spend more money now and more money in the North," where the Swedish PRT is based.

Appoint Honest Officials

17. (C) Hoglund also stated that FM Bildt thinks it is important to show the Afghan population that there is an alternative to the "current pervasive corruption" (Ref B). Arguing that it was a mistake to have made "a light footprint" in the fight against corruption, Hoglund stated that President Karzai would appoint honest officials in the provinces "if the international community applies enough pressure." Karzai "knows exactly who is corrupt, who is selling drugs," she continued.

More Resources to EUPOL

18. (C) FM Bildt wants Sweden to use its upcoming EU Presidency to lead the EU effort in police training, according to senior staffers Andres Jato and Mikaela Kumlin-Granit. Sweden should set an example by recruiting

more police trainers for EUPOL through enhanced salary and benefits packages, and possibly through new job requirements that make overseas deployment a prerequisite for promotion. Three Swedish police are currently in Afghanistan, and three more are now in training for their upcoming tours, MFA sources told us March 18.

Bildt Aware of Problem of Pakistan

19. (C) Senior staff in Foreign Minister Carl Bildt's office told us on separate occasions that Bildt understands the regional nature of the problem and the importance of working on Pakistan too, though he laments the fact that it is so very difficult to operate there or to find sensible projects given the lack of absorptive capacity. Sweden is unlikely to expand its development assistance to Pakistan at this time, MFA and SIDA contacts tell us, because all of its regional focus is on Afghanistan (Ref C).

SILVERMAN